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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 OIC-02 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10
EUR-12 L-03 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 HEW-04 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 ICA-11
/133 W
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R 061053Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 536
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 2612

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ILO, ELAB, CE

SUBJ: ILO 1978 CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 127537

1. SUMMARY: PER INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, CURRENT U.S. POSITION REGARDING ILO WITHDRAWAL/REENTRY DISCUSSED WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA) OFFICIALS AND LEADING MEMBERS OF SRI LANKA DELEGATION TO SUBJECT CONFERENCE. RESPONSE FROM DELEGATES WAS GENERALLY SUPPORT FOR U.S. REENTRY. HOWEVER, MOST DELEGATES STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND BASIS FOR U.S. WITHDRAWAL. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE SRI LANKA DELEGATION WILL INITIATE CORRECTIVE STEPS. END SUMMARY.

2. GOVERNMENT DELEGATES INEXPERIENCED
GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA (GSL) DELEGATION WILL BE HEADED BY MINISTER OF LABOR, CAPTAIN C.P.J. SENEVIRATNE. CAPTAIN SENEVIRATNE HAS BEEN MINISTER OF LABOR LESS THAN ONE YEAR AND IS INEXPERIENCED REGARDING ILO AFFAIRS. HE IS CONSCIOUS OF THE GSL'S GENERAL POLICY OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD THE U.S., AND TOLD REPORTING OFFICER THAT PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE EXPRESSED
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INTEREST IN U.S. REEENTRY INTO ILO. SENEVIRATNE WILL WISH TO DISCUSS U.S. POSITION AT CONFERENCE, AT LEAST TO MINIMIZE GSL ACTIONS THAT MIGHT NEGATIVELY EFFECT GSL/USG RELATIONS. CAPTAIN SENEVIRATNE WILL BE ASSISTED BY COMMISSIONER OF LABOR A.L.B.K. PERERA AND A LOCAL LABOR ATTORNEY, MR. SATYNDRA. LIKE SENEVIRATNE, PERERA AND SATNYDRA SUPPORT U.S. REENTRY BUT LACK FAMILIARITY WITH ILO AFFAIRS GENERALLY.

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3. OUTSTANDING WORKERS' DELEGATE
THE WORKER'S REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CONFERENCE WILL BE MR. S. THONDAMAN, PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA'S LARGEST UNION, THE CEYLON WORKERS CONGRESS, AND A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. THONDAMAN HAS REPRESENTED SRI LANKA AT ILO CONFERENCES SEVERAL TIMES AND HAS SERVED ON THE ORGANIZATION'S GOVERNING BODY. HE IS KNOWLEDGEABLE OF ILO AFFAIRS, SYMPATHETIC TO U.S., AND IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST MEMBERS OF THE GSL DELEGATION. THONDAMAN WILL BE ASSISTED BY MR. LESLIE FERNANDO, CHIEF ORGANIZER OF THE UNITED NATIONAL PARTY (UNP) UNION AND ONE OF PRESIDENT JAYEWARDENE'S MAIN TRADE UNION SUPPORTERS. THIS WILL BE MR. FERNANDO'S INITIAL INTRODUCTION TO ILO AFFAIRS AND HE IS LIKELY TO FOLLOW MR. THONDAMAN'S GUIDANCE.

4. EXPERIENCED EMPLOYERS' DELEGATE
THE EMPLOYERS' DELEGATE FROM SRI LANKA WILL BE MR. E.S. APPADURAI, WHO IS SECRETARY OF THE SRI LANKA EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION. MR. APPADURAI HAS ALSO REPRESENTED THE GSL AT ILO CONFERENCES AND IS WELL VERSED IN ILO MATTERS, INCLUDING U.S. CONCERNS. HE AND THONDAMAN WILL PROBABLY MAKE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS BY THE GSL DELEGATION.

5. GSL DELEGATION ANXIOUS TO SUPPORT U.S. REENTRY
WHILE GSL DELEGATION WILL NOT UNDERTAKE ANY BOLD INITIATIVES, IT WILL WATCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT U.S. STANCE WITH-
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OUT DAMAGING ITS POSITION AMONG THE NON-ALIGNED NATIONS.
ALL DELGATES INDICATED TO US THEIR WISH TO BE CONTACTED BY OUR DELEGATES IN ORDER TO LEARN MORE OF U.S. CONCERNS WITH AIM OF ASSISTING WHERE PRACTICABLE. U.S. REPS SHOULD PURSUE DISCUSSIONS WITH GSL DELEGATION ESPECIALLY THONDAMAN, APPADURAI AND SENEVIRATNE.

6. CAPTAIN SENEVIRATNE WILL RETURN TO SRI LANKA ON ABOUT JUNE 15TH. THE OTHER DELEGATES WILL REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THE CONFERENCE.
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